

Jersey honors King

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NEWARK — More than 600 people paid tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. and his dream Sunday at a fund-raising reception at Newark Symphony Hall.

The highlight of the \$25-per-person reception was the appearance of Coretta Scott King, widow of the slain civil rights leader, who would have been 55 years old Sunday.

As she took her place on the dais, a member of her entourage said Mrs. King was tired.

Speakers took turns lauding the works of both Coretta King and her late husband.

"I was vacationing in the Virgin Islands. I cut my vacation short to be here today. I'm one of the early supporters of the King birthday bill so I wouldn't have missed this day for anything," said Congressman Peter Rodino, D-10th.

RODINO SAID much of what King fought for is happening today, although King was assassinated in 1968 and did not live to see it materialize.

Gov. Thomas H. Kean reminded the audience that he was a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference as a student in the 1960s. The Conference adhered to King's teachings of non-violent social change.

The governor then compared King to Ghandi, Thoreau and Jesus Christ, saying each man attempted to squash the social injustices of his day.

He ended his speech with a quote from the Apostle Paul and related it to King's life, saying, "I fought a good fight, I finished my course, I have kept the faith."

After Mrs. King mounted the podium to a thunderous standing ovation, a hush fell over the



Herald-News Photo by Edmund R. Pomponio

Coretta Scott King, widow of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., holds a copy of a book about her late husband while addressing more than 600 people at Newark Symphony Hall on Sunday.

room. Recounting her years of fighting for social justice with her husband, she told the audience there's still much to be done. "I'm on the move all the time. From here, I'm scheduled to be in New York City when I leave Newark this evening. I'm trying to continue Martin's dream," she said.

"I'm glad his birthday is finally a national holiday, but the politicians in Georgia have not seen fit to honor Martin's birthday." She noted she and her supporters would continue signing petitions until Georgia honors the day as will the rest of the country.

THE NATIONAL holiday honoring King's birthday will begin in 1986 and be observed on the third Monday in January.

Mrs. King beamed when she spoke about the success of the March on Washington '83. "The press thought the march would a fiasco," she said. "They asked me who would be the star on that day. I told them, why Martin of course. Just as he was the star in '63. They didn't believe me. But as I predicted, he was the star. After all, no one can upstage Martin," she smiled.

She brought her speech to an

abrupt halt, noting she was racing time.

Milton Buck, president of The Newark Symphony Hall, presented Mrs. King with a check for \$12,500. The check, he said, would help defray the cost of the Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change, in Atlanta, Ga. Buck promised additional funds from Sunday's event would be forthcoming.

Gospel notables like the Rev. James Cleveland and Dorothy Norwood also participated. The event was sponsored by Newark Symphony Hall, WNJR radio and Savoy Records.